THE PROFILE OF A MATURING MAN
TITUS 2:1-8

NEED: TO MATURE IN OUR WALK WITH GOD

PROPOSITION: MATURITY COMES AS WE APPLY OUR FAITH TO REAL SITUATIONS IN LIFE.

OBJECTIVE: TO CHALLENGE THE CHRISTIAN MEN TO REACH FOR MATURITY IN THEIR LIVES

INTRODUCTION:
Maturity does not automatically come with age. You can add years to your life and not add maturity. It is tragic when a man or woman comes to the end of life, and they have not achieved maturity in their lives. I have chosen deliberately the title, “The Profile of a Maturing Man.” Because in a real sense a person never really achieves maturity. All of us will be in the process of maturing throughout all of life.

In this practical word of instruction to Titus the pastor, Paul touches on something that needs to be understood concerning maturity. Maturity comes as a person is able to relate to the every day stuff of life the essentials of their faith. He admonishes Titus to teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.” The Apostle knows that what a person believes will ultimately affect how they behave. “Sound” doctrine or teaching is actually healthy doctrine or teaching. The passage stands in sharp contrast to the false teachers that the Apostle has exposed in the paragraphs in the last chapter. In contrast of these false teachers, Titus is to be careful that he gives out the kind of healthy teachings that will produce mature members of the family.
In this extended passage in which he addresses the different members of the family, it is important to know that he began with the “older men.” This is because in the family structure of that day there was tremendous responsibility upon the “older men” in the family. However, I think if the Apostle is writing in our day he would still begin with the older men. God has always placed special responsibility on mature men to lead the way for the family.

Exactly who would be included in this description of “older men”? Scholars have not agreed on the exact age designation involved in this word. Some have said it would be men who were at least 60 years old. Others have wanted to lower the age to fifty. Another has suggested, and I think appropriately so, that an older man is one whose children have matured to the point that they now have their own families. Whenever your children begin to have children that moves you to a different level in the process of life. It is important to note that this word of admonition Titus is to pass on to these older men reminds us that even though they have come to the latter years of life they are still in need of continuing the process of spiritual growth. The things that Titus is to teach them give to us the profile of a maturing man. On this Father’s Day I want us to study this profile in some detail.

I. THE MATURING MAN DEMONSTRATES STRENGTH AND CHARACTER.

The first three words used by the Apostle give us insight in to the character of this maturing man. “Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-control.”

1. They are not mastered from without.
“Temperate” is translated in various ways in the different translations. The older version translates it “sober.” The basic idea in the word is to not be guilty of indulging in alcoholic beverages, wine, or liquors. It means to be temperate in respect to the use of strong drink. However, it is a mistake to confine the word to just this one stimulate that can lead to excessive behavior.

The idea in the word is that a person does no allow themselves to come under the control of some outside stimulate. It could be wine. It could be sexual stimulation. It could be greed. It could be several different things that exercise control over your inner life from the outside. You open your life to them and as they come into your life they take over the control of your life. They are able to determine your responses and your behavior.

In this profile of a maturing man he will not be mastered by these outside influences. He will not be mastered by alcohol or drugs. He will not be mastered by sexual temptation. He will not be mastered by a love for money. Rather he will exercise eternal mastery in his own life.

“Temperate” is not a character trait that our culture puts a lot of value upon. However, it is one that God places great value upon. The Biblical profile of a maturing man is that of one whose life is not brought under the mastery of outside forces.

2. They are sensible in their decisions.

The word used by he Apostle Paul is translated in the New International Version “worthy of respect.” The word is translated by some “grave.” It is translated by others to reflect an idea of
being “honorable,” or to be “dignified.” The idea in this word is the person has a serious outlook on life. It does not mean that they are a gloomy killjoy but they rather live their lives “in the light of eternity.” They are aware of their accountability to God and that some day they will stand before God to give an account for the deeds done in the body. This affects the way that they make decisions day by day in the process of their lives. They make their decisions with a sense of seriousness and gravity with an awareness that God is a witness to the decisions they make.

It is the opposite of the flippant attitude that often characterizes the society in which we live. Many live life as though there is no accountability to God. They live life as though they are accountable only to themselves. But the maturing man has cultivated in himself such a God awareness that he makes all of his decisions with a certain sensibility, prudence, and wisdom. He acts wisely in the things that he does.

3. They are mastered from within.

The third word that the Apostle uses is translated “self-control.” This word has in it the idea of inner control over the desires and impulses of life. It is the other side of this first character trait that we have considered. No only is the person not mastered from without, but he has rather achieved a mastery within that gives him control of his responses to the things that happen around him.

For the Christian this has a special dimension to it. It is the indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit that enables us to exercise personal self-control in our lives. This person with this Holy Spirit
enables self-control is able to put a restraint upon the destructive expressions of anger. It is able to put restraint upon the impulses toward self-indulgences. It is able to put a restraint upon all those negative inclinations that come from our being a sinful human being. Gaining this self-control is a part of a process of maturing, of growing. No one automatically comes to this, and none of us come to it at the same pace. But the sign of a maturing man is that he is daily and obviously gaining inner control over his life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This again conflicts with the prevailing practices around us. Our world may well put the label upon him “repressed.” But he is not talking about some kind of destructive “repression” that the psychologists and psychiatrist are so concerned about. This is rather a process by which one brings those destructive forces that are in all of us through our sinfulness under the control of the Holy Spirit so that our lives are moving in a positive way toward the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, the first part of this profile of a maturing man has to do with character – what you are within. It speaks directly to what is mastering your life and what determines the decisions that you make day by day. Your relationship with God is impacting how you live life day by day and moment by moment.

II. THEY MANIFEST A HEALTHY ATTITUDE.

In the second part the Apostle says that these maturing men are to be “sound in faith, in love and endurance.” “Sound” is again the word for healthy. That which produces health in the person is sound. Earlier he had spoken of sound doctrine but here he refers to healthy faith, love, and
endurance. The basic idea in the mind of the Apostle is that in the maturing man there will be these healthy, wholesome, fruitful attitudes.

1. An attitude of healthy faith toward God.

“Sound in faith” refers to personal faith in this context. He does not mean that the person is sound in faith because they believe the right things. What a person believes is obviously important in this process but it is not the most important thing is what does a person do about what they believe. In this case he is referring to our having a healthy, wholesome attitude toward God. What we have learned of God in the “sound doctrine” has lead us to rely upon the Lord to have confidence in the Lord, to trust in the Lord in a wholesome, healthy, way.

If God measures men by the healthiness of their trust in God, how healthy are you? It is not how many facts do you know about God or how many theological propositions you can cite concerning God, but rather are you relying upon the Lord. Has the information and insights you have gained about God lead you to rely upon the Lord. As we get older our faith in the Lord should get healthier. Our trust in the Lord should be stronger today than it was last year in our lives.

There is no way to over-estimate what it means for a family to have a mature man as its leader whose attitude toward God is one of strong faith and trust.

2. The healthy attitude of love toward others.
The second word used by the Apostle concerning our soundness is “in love.” In this case it is love toward our fellowman. It is love toward the other members of our family. It is love toward the other members of our church. It is love toward the other members of the society in which we live. The mark of maturity that stands out in the profile of a maturing man is his healthy attitude of love toward others.

However, it would be an injustice of this word to limit it an attitude. We must not limit this to just having healthy feelings toward others. The word used by the Apostle will not allow us that comfort. It is a healthy feeling that leads to healthy actions toward others. Actually, to even get closer to the heart of the word used by the Apostle it means to have and to place healthy values upon the other person. It is to see them as a person of worth and value. As we apply what our faith has taught us in the day to day events of life, our faith causes us to see other persons as being created in the image of God – as being persons for whom Christ died! When you begin to see them as persons created in image of God and persons for whom Christ died, you begin to relate to them accordingly. And this is that love that the Apostle is requiring in the profile of a maturing man.

It doesn’t matter how many years your have lived, if there is not evident in your life a genuine love for others, then you are not a maturing man.

III. THEY MANIFEST HEALTHY PATIENCE TOWARD THE TRIALS OF LIFE.

The other word to which the Apostle makes reference in his call for “soundness” is “endurance.” This word is translated by others as “patience.” The idea in the word is that ability to bear up
under the pressures that come upon life. Endurance is a good translation here. It is that attitude that says about life, “I believe God is in charge of the universe. I am on mission for God in the world. No matter what comes into my life, I will continue to love God and serve Him as long as I live.” It is an attitude that says, “Thou He slay me yet will I trust Him!” It is that inner attitude of determination that refuses to turn back, refuses to become bitter, refuses to give up, refuses to surrender! It rather keeps on keeping on regardless of what happens. It is the attitude that characterizes people who are the winners in life.

When you put these two things together you have a rather clear description of the profile of a maturing man. He is the person who demonstrates strength in his character. He is the person who manifest a healthy attitude. His life is marked by temperance, discipline, sensibility and good judgment, and self-mastery, and faith, and love, and patience. Why not take these as something of a standard of measurement by which to measure your own progress toward maturity. None of us are there yet, but we ought to be moving toward this in our Christian life.

- When you read this whole chapter you discover that God in His grace has made the provisions necessary for us to be moving toward such maturity. It is His grace that schools us and teaches us how to master life and to live a fruitful and victorious life day by day. Let this Father’s Day be for every Christian man in this congregation a moment of recommitment toward the maturing lifestyle.